CWM Sailing Meeting

Nov 9

In attendance: Steve, Shannon, Jonathan, Mike, Sarah, Nat, Dana, Matthew, Bill

Nat met last week with Susan, Fred C, Jonathan, Sarah, and Dana.

It was determined that Susan would work on drafting the language for the Positioning Statement.

The group is moving away from the verbiage created by Nat and Matthew, and towards laying out themes for the voyage, such as ocean ecology and relationships with the sea.

It could be about environment, learning from the past, awareness, ingenuity, multiculturalism, changes over time, relationships and using historic artifacts.

The issue of advocacy is still being grappled with.

We have backed away from calling her a New England ship, but should remember that we got there to not have to deal with the contemporary whaling story of Japan, Norway, etc.

We are instead advocating being catalysts for advancing discussion.

The statement is about why are we restoring and supporting CWM, not just about the journey so it will serve for fundraising conversations as well.

\*Susan should have a draft in a week that we can start talking and get into print. Please circulate to the group for review in advance of our next meeting.

Steve has said that “this is what great museums do!” and has gotten good feedback on this phrase.

There should be a central theme that four or so statements hang from so they can be crafted to fit different constituents.

This is about outreach- getting beyond our grounds and taking her places.

It is about engaging with history – having a tactile experience.

It is something dramatic and bold that distinguishes us.

It enhances what the object can do.

It is an innovative use of collections to interact with a broader audience.

It is all a part of the role of stewardship of our collections and how to connect them with people in this changing world.

\*We should sit in a room and tape a conversation of the team working on this. Since we can’t all go as a team to fundraise, we need to create a DVD with our group thoughts and perspectives.

Great museums innovate. They take calculated risks and changes for innovative return.

We can envision all of this because we are a good sized, reputable museum. It allows us to think big.

\*Mike should think of companion visuals to the DVD. A collection of stills and recorded discussion. We need to show current images, not historic images. We already have a contextual piece.

NOAA Foundation folks came to the Museum and went onboard. Two seemed especially engaged and all were inspired.

The term Public History has come up- this fits within that.

Steve met with Chuck Townsend, new trustee, former commodore of NYYC, current CEO and President of Conde Nast.

A promised 30 minute meeting ended up lasting 90 minutes.

He had a stack of covers of New Yorker from 1920-present that had images of boats on the cover. He showed how the frequency has decreased over the years.

There is a polarization of yachting and the thought that it has become unreachable and exculsive.

There is an idea of an exhibit of the history of yachting as shown through the magazine covers.

Steve asked Chuck about Butsy Lovelace. Turns out Butsy was responsible for Chuck’s first NYC job and he credits him with his success and thinks of him as a mentor.

Steve asked him why Mystic Seaport? Chuck’s response was about his love of the sea, the importance of the NYYC to him, and that America needs Mystic Seaport.

It is a bad time for him, financially and with time constraints, but he will do what he can for us.

Steve asked him how he would market CWM Sailing. He says it is very marketable and his first ideas were that CWM exudes America and American values. Any major corporation would not shy away from the ship or the Museum. Words like strength, integrity, hardcore American values, also education, energy, green ideas.

Chuck wants to be behind the scenes, but not a chair on a committee.

If advertising money is going to be spent, it will be on emotion. Use America as angle. Wherever CWM went, she was America.

It will be all about the return on investment for the sponsors. Protect America’s assets and thus American values, patriotism.

We have to figure out who our audience is and what do we mean to that audience.

The voyage is a mean’s to an audience. We may have to change our themes depending on corporate audiences.

Advertisers are shifting away from hard media spends to soft media, like programs. Authentic, genuine and brings value to the corporation.

We can absolutely hope for corporate support. He thinks we should try to get one company for $10 million instead of getting smaller investors.

We need to figure out what is in it for the companies. How many people will show up at port events? How can we get visibility?

Whatever it is that they get should be grounded in our mission and program.

Can we get Discovery Channel to do a series on all different Maritime Museums?

If we get a sponsor early on, then they will have access to all of our visitors in the 4 more years before we take her sailing.

If we can get big money, a lot of it can go to endow the boat and they can have their name on an endowment.

They can use the restoration process for their advertising, not just the voyage.

Since we have moved away from a “New England ship” we can target big American companies, not just local CT ones.

\*Steve will follow up with him about a media consultant.

\*We should brainstorm our top 10 big money sponsors. Nat and his dept should start brainstorming.

Shannon attended ASTA Conference and spoke with Walter Rybka of Niagara, Dan Moreland of Picton Castle, Kip Files of Victory Chimes, Kurt Voss of Elysa and Alix Thorne, trustee.

All are interested in being on advisory board and are likely captains for voyage. Wesley Heersen of Niagara also offered to help.

Dan and Walter both emphatic on the need for preparation way in advance of the sail. Dan gave copies of his safety and training manuals to review.

Dan offered to make sails on his next world voyage and also suggested bringing along our sails to patch. He also offered to bring someone from our staff on the voyage to start training them.

Shannon gave presentation to the group on the restoration and sail. All was well received. Plan to have the ASTA Regional meeting here in Feb / March to allow people to see restoration.

Gary Jobson was keynote speaker – he is doing a TV documentary on the Tall Ships Challenge in the Great Lakes this summer.

There was interest in Mystic Seaport holding a rigging course for ASTA captains and crew in conjunction with new USCG regulations. This will bring in future crew members to see the project.

\*Merchandising. Needs a bigger discussion. Commemorative coins, wooden coins, store selling stuff, pens, little bits to people with certified document, donor pieces, tool handles.

\*Shannon will meet with Steve on Friday to finalize Advisory group lists so we can start inviting them to join.

We need to think about how to get all of our staff onboard for the voyage. Need to consider what is “staff”. Seasonal? Full time? Part time? Retired? Volunteers?